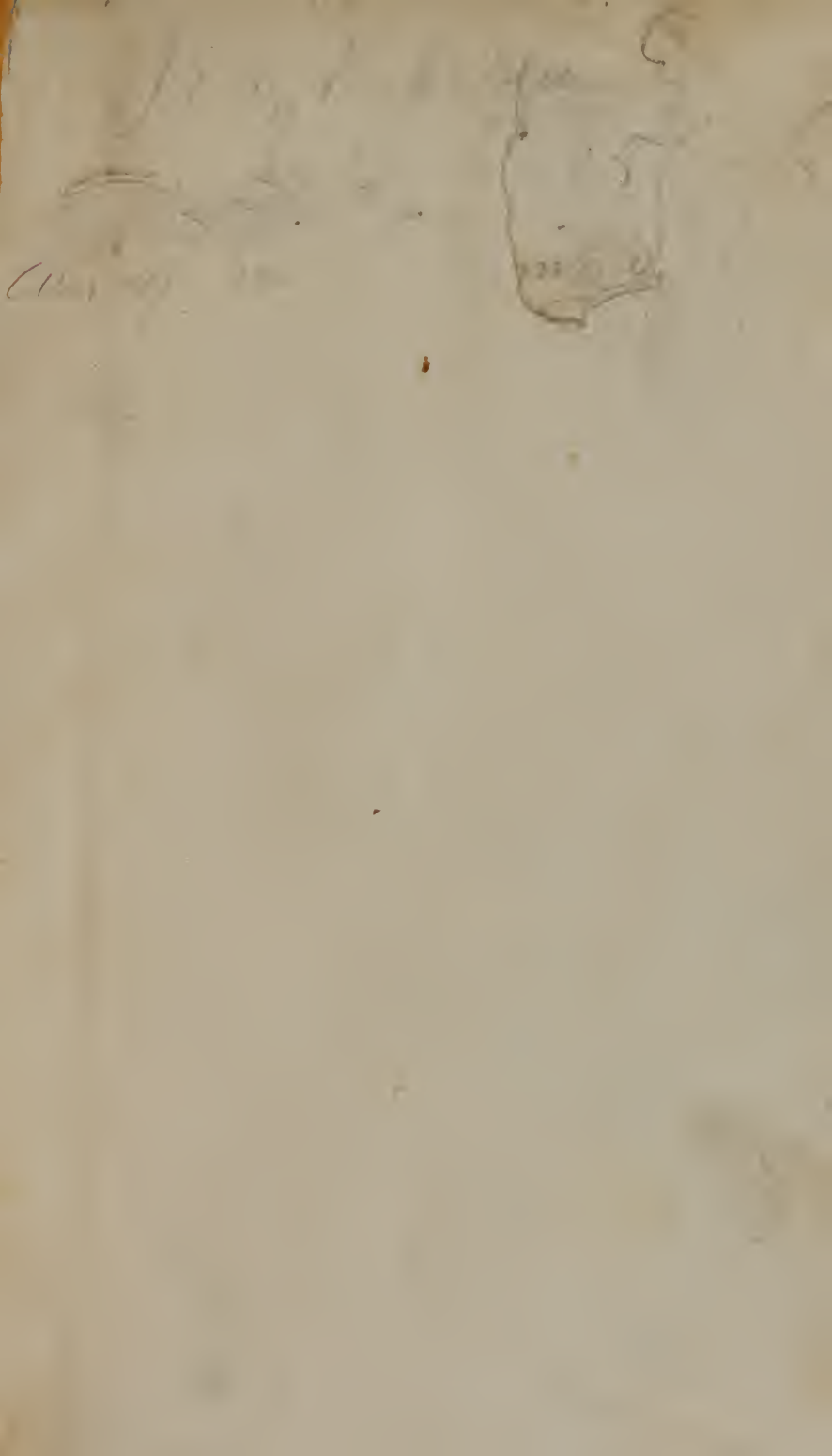


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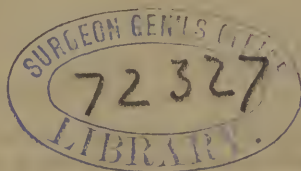
ECLECTIC MEDICAL COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA,

OCTOBER 19TH, 1857.

BY

MARSHALL CALKINS, M. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THE INSTITUTES AND PRACTICE OF SURGERY.



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PRELIMINARY CORRESPONDENCE.

Philadelphia, October 29th, 1857.

PROF. M. CALKINS,

Dear Sir:—We, the undersigned a Committee appointed by the Students of the Eclectic Medical College of Pennsylvania, respectfully solicit for publication, a copy of your very excellent Address on the American Eclectic Practice of Medicine.

Respectfully yours,

F. W. CAULKINS, }
H. O. ADAMS, } *Committee.*
J. G. RICH. }

PROF. M. CALKINS.

Philadelphia, October 31st, 1857.

Gentlemen:—Accept my acknowledgments for the politeness of your request, in regard to the publication of my Introductory Lecture. While I cheerfully comply with that request, it is due to myself to say, that the thoughts were thrown together in a hasty manner almost without premeditation.

Most respectfully yours,

MARSHALL CALKINS.

Messrs. CAULKINS, ADAMS, }
and RICH. }

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN:—From the study of the development of human intelligence in all directions and throughout all times, we discover a great fundamental law which has a solid foundation of proof both in the facts of our organization and in our historical experience. The law is this;—that each of our leading conceptions, each branch of human knowledge passes successively through three different conditions; the fictitious, the metaphysical and the scientific. The first supposes phenomena to be produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings; and hence the expression of the poet:—

“Lo, the poor Indian whose untutored mind,
Sees God in clouds or hears him in the wind.”

The second supposes, instead of supernatural beings, the existence of personified abstractions capable of producing all phenomena,—such as an intelligent vital force, the imaginary *demon* which Paracelsus supposed to exist in the stomach, whose function it was to mix the various articles of food together.

In the third stage of Science the mind has given up its search after the origin of the Universe, and applies its energies to the study of the laws of causation, and the relations of invariable succession and resemblance. Reason and observation are the producers of this knowledge. What science in this stage would consider an explanation of facts, is simply an establishment of a connection between simple phenomena and general facts or laws,—

“For all are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is and God the soul.”

The progress from the fictitious to the positive or scientific philosophy has been gradual. Astronomical science consisting of simple and general facts first arrived at mathematical certainty. Next Terrestrial Physics, then Chemistry, and last of all Physiology. The degree of progress has been different in different

ages of the world. The wisdom of Aristotle, and the learning of the Alexandrian School, the introduction of Natural Science into Western Europe by the Arabs were important eras. So too was that produced by the precepts of Bacon, the conceptions of Descartes, and the discoveries of Galileo. Since then, the influence of metaphysical theories in Science has been diminishing in every department of knowledge. In medicine we may observe a similar change in the progress of ages. First, there was the Priest, and the Mesmerizer, with their mysterious ceremonies and occult theories of the Divinities. Next, there was the Greek metaphysician, laboring to discover the "*causa causarum*" the essence of life, and Paracelsus seeking for the Philosopher's stone, and introducing by his bombastic clamor the use of Mercury and Antimony as remedial agents. Lastly, a Harvey, a Hunter, and a Jenner, analyze phenomena by reason and judgment, regardless of the theories of their predecessors, and the whole face of Medical Science beams with new lustre, revealing principles upon which are based the Modern Science of Physiology and the facts of Pathology. The mysteries and theories of the two former stages must pass away. We might as well seek to learn mechanics of the precepts of Archimedes, as medicine from the teachings of Herophilus and Paracelsus. Scientific medicine must rest on the basis of modern discovery and invention, and the unerring principles of positive science. The law of cure which these teach is that derived from the teachings of Pathology and Physiology; that the phenomena of disease are a simple prolongation of the phenomena of the normal or healthy state beyond the ordinary limits of variation, that it is a perversion by excess, by diminution or by deprivation of some natural function.

In these conclusions Eclecticism finds the direction in which we should direct the mind in order to discover useful remedies. The phenomena of inflammation are now considered, not as proof of exalted vitality, but as the effect of a depression of the vital force. According to this view of inflammation the scientific reformer adopts such means and remedies, selected from every accessible source, as tend to excite capillary circulation, restore tonicity to the vessels, secretion and nutrition, and increase the elimination of effete matter from the blood faster than nature could do it without medication. These are some of the principles

derived from scientific investigation which the Eclectic uses as a guide to the selection of remedies. These we believe to be sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the truth of all well-selected experience and sound medical reasoning.

But how can we select the best remedies from the various sects in medicine? In order to aid the mind in this difficult process let us consider some of the general principles which should guide in making a proper selection. All science harmonizes. The law of gravitation operates throughout the universe—matter changes but is never annihilated. If, therefore, an assertion is made that a finite or tangible effect, may result from the use of an infinitely small quantity of medicine, we know it to be false, because it contradicts the teachings of science. If the assertion is made that one remedy or class of remedies is sufficient for the cure of every morbid condition of the organism, we know this to be false, because it contradicts the principles of organic chemistry which teaches that the body is composed of various elements, such as air, water, sulphur, chlorine, iron, potassium, phosphorus, lime, &c., and that their proportions are not always normal, giving rise to anemia, plethora, scrofula and rickets. For these reasons we do not adopt the extreme views of Homeopathy, Hydropathy, Chronothermism, or Thomsonism, because each of these extreme theories contradicts more or less the established truths of science. If the assertion is made that Mercury is necessary and indispensable for the removal of disease, when chemistry asserts that nature never uses this substance in building up the organism, when Physiology declares that it combines with the tissues, forming the nuclei of disease, tubercle, necrosis, and paralysis, and when Pathology declares it to be so dangerous that human skill cannot avoid its occasional injurious results, we believe the assertion to be erroneous, and that other and less dangerous remedies should be substituted. But it may be asked has not experience established beyond all doubt, the utility of this drug? Do not the eminent men in Allopathy and Homeopathy concur in recommending this as an invaluable therapeutic agent? In reply let us first consider the nature of the testimony adduced in its favor. At the very threshold of our inquiry, we everywhere find contradiction. Those who recommend it, declare it to be injurious, and that no

man can tell beforehand in whom its ill-effects are to be expected. The testimony is thus contradictory even from the time of Paracelsus to the present, and facts which Homeopathy has established, prove that the less of this drug, there is used *cæteris paribus* the better the success; and Hydropathy, without the use of any medicine, claims and doubtless has better success than Homeopathy. In short, so great is the skepticism relative to the utility of this and kindred drugs not found in the organism, that many learned men boldly affirm that medicine as practiced by the great mass of physicians who use the mercurials, antimonials, and preparations of arsenic and lead, is, on the whole a *curse*, to humanity. To verify this, I here quote an analysis of a lecture of the great Physiologist of France, MAGENDIE, as made by an American Medical Student in Paris. MAGENDIE, opened a lecture somewhat in the following words:—

GENTLEMEN:—"Medicine is a great humbug. I know it is called a science—science, indeed! It is nothing like science. Doctors are mere empirics, when they are not charlatans. We are as ignorant as men can be. Who knows anything in the world about medicine? Gentlemen, you have done me the honor to come here to attend my lectures, and I must tell you frankly now in the beginning, that I know nothing in the world about medicine, and I don't know anybody who does know anything about it. Don't think for a moment that I haven't read the bills advertising the course of lectures at the Medical School. I know that this man teaches anatomy, that man teaches pathology, another man physiology, such-a-one therapeutics, such-another materia medica—*Eh bien! et apres?* What's known about all that? Why, gentlemen, at the school of Montpellier they discarded the study of anatomy, and taught nothing but the dispensary; and the doctors educated there knew just as much and were quite as successful as any others. I repeat it, nobody knows anything about medicine. True enough, we are gathering facts every day. We can produce typhus fever, for example, by injecting a certain substance into the veins of a dog—that's something; we can alleviate diabetes, and, I see distinctly, we are fast approaching the day when phthisis can be cured as easily as any disease."

"We are collecting facts in the right spirit, and I dare say in a century or so the accumulation of facts may enable our successors to form a medical science; but I repeat it to you, there is no such thing now as a medical science. Who can tell me how to cure the headache? or the gout? or disease of the heart.—Nobody. Oh! you tell me doctors cure people. I grant you people are cured. But how are they cured? Gentlemen, nature does a great deal; imagination does a great deal. Doctors do but little * * * * when they don't do harm. Let me tell you, gentlemen, what I did when I was the head physician at Hotel Dieu. Some three or four thousand patients passed through my hands every year. I divided the patients into two classes; with one, I followed the dispensary, and gave them the usual medicines without having the least idea why, or wherefore; to the other, I gave bread pills and colored water, without, of course, letting them know anything about it * * * and occasionally, gentlemen, I would create a third division, to whom I gave nothing whatever. These last would fret a good deal, they would feel they were neglected (sick people always feel they are neglected, unless they are well drugged * * * * *les imbeciles!*) and they would irritate themselves until they got really sick, but nature invariably came to the rescue, and all the persons in the third class got well. There was a little mortality among those who received the bread pills and colored water, and the mortality was greatest among those who were carefully drugged according to the dispensary."

This testimony of MAGENDIE implies that the common remedies used by Allopathic physicians are worse than the entire exclusion of medication. It also, admits that facts are now being collected, out of which a scientific system of treating disease is forming. In the adoption of new and better remedies, and in following in the pathway of science, in cultivating a spirit of liberality and progress, we, as Eclectic physicians claim to have made, and to be now making those great improvements of which Magendie speaks; and, moreover, we claim that we have and can demonstrate that the results of Eclectic practice, are far more productive of success than any exclusive system, or than the entire exclusion of medicine. Unless this were true the profession of medicine would possess no utility. Only so far as medical

treatment arrests the progress and shortens the duration of disease, which, if left to itself, would have terminated in death, is it really valuable. If it can be proved that it does not do this, then medicine is of doubtful utility. In the results of Eclectic treatment, however, we find reliable proof that in the most fatal epidemics of cholera, yellow fever, typhoid fever, dysentery, and inflammatory diseases generally, the mortality is far less than where the patient has no medical treatment, or where dependence is placed upon hygienic means alone. Indeed, I may say that the remarkable success of this system of practice, has been so obvious to the public, that it has made a rapid and almost unparalleled progression in those intelligent communities where education has fitted the public mind to judge impartially as to the comparative merits of this and other systems of medication. This system being American in its origin, and unbiassed by the creeds of European birth, must partake more of the attributes of science, and reason than the Allopathic system, which boasts of its age, and that its pedigree extends back to those early periods when superstition, bigotry, and ignorance were co-extensive with the human race. The history of the world, assures us that, in proportion to the general diffusion of knowledge among an educated people, is the progress of science and art; and that salutary reforms are more frequently made by the people, than by the University of which it is the interest and tendency to establish a dogmatism of opinion. In a Republic like ours, reason and education must and will triumph over mere arbitrary authority, and those sublime but *false* theories, and those poisonous remedies, a knowledge of which has floated down to us across the ages, even now obscuring like a mist the bright mirror of truth, must pass away at the inauguration of the new era of medical liberality and progress. Already the Goddess has thrown her Golden Apple of truth into the circles of medical dogmatism, and spasms and convulsions shake the whole fraternity as when the fabled Giant turns under Mount Etna. In the Hindoo's dream man first appeared curbed with an iron bit in his mouth, from which the reins went back to an iron hand. This is symbolical of the ethical dogmatism of Allopathy. The scene changed and he saw a man led by threads proceeding from the brain, and going back to an invisible hand. This is symbolical of freedom of thought and investigation.

Having thus referred to several general considerations relative to medical progression, I now give a brief summary of the more special improvements which American Eclectic physicians are striving to make.

In the first place, they seek to ascertain the fatality of disease when no medication is used, in order to learn whether or not, medicine has a salutary effect. Without this standard of comparison no certain decision can be attained relative to the merits of any medicine or system of treatment. 2d. They strive to develop the resources of our indigenous *Materia Medica*,—inasmuch as they consider native remedies better adapted to our peculiar diseases than foreign,—in order to ascertain their utility, and what diseases can be removed by these remedies, and also, to learn the *modus operandi* of each therapeutic agent introduced by the different sects of the profession. 3d. They believe, from the testimony of the most experienced and learned physicians and from the deductions of scientific knowledge, that the use of Antimony, Mercury, Arsenic, and Lead, are not necessary, and that the objects, for the attainment of which they are prescribed, may be more surely and safely secured by other means within the reach of the physician. 4th. They consider that the practice of compounding a great variety of medicines together, prevents the observer from ascertaining their medicinal potency, and that it should, therefore, be abandoned. 5th. They think it better for the patient to rely upon the unaided efforts of nature, unless there is an obvious indication for the use of medicine of the operation of which we have accurate knowledge. 6th. They believe that neither Allopathy, Homeopathy, nor Hydropathy, aside from hygienic influences, has arrived to such perfection in treatment as to materially lessen the natural fatality of disease, and that the only guide we have for selecting the best remedies from each system, is that furnished by scientific investigation in Chemistry, Physiology, and Pathology. 7th. That in the great majority of chronic cases the physiological and hygienic treatment by diet, air, exercise, water, mental and moral influences, temperature, clothing, and occupation is far more successful than the practice of drug medication so general among physicians. 8th. That the only sure method of improving medicine is by the exclusion of errors and the reception of scientific truth, until the

accumulation is sufficiently great to elevate medical practice to the position of an exact science. 9th. They take a medium position between the extremes of the profession, laboring to unite the excellencies of the medical conservative with the valuable ideas of the fanatic. From each they would take what is founded on science and to each would ascribe the meed of honor for the service rendered humanity. 10th. They believe in disseminating medical knowledge among the people and in the thorough education of the profession, in always making science the umpire, which is destined to light her torch and say to the wanderer in the mist of doubt, "here is truth and there is error."

From this abstract it will appear that the Eclectic system comprehends the valuable material of all other systems—that, in order to attain its objects, a most comprehensive and thorough education is indispensable. The views of Eclectics relative to the acquisition of medical knowledge are reasonable and practical. They deem it necessary to generalize and select the more important facts and principles of science, to adopt the inductive system of reasoning, to avoid the formation of abstruse theories, to ever make the inquiry while reading medical works, whether there is anything in the teachings of science, that corroborates the statements made, thereby cultivating the reasoning faculties and eliciting free discussion and investigation. Their object is to make self-educated physicians, to stimulate the pupil to the development of his own powers of mind by exercising them in the solution of the intricate problems of medical study. This self-culture of the intellect, they deem a pre-requisite to success, and to the production of that originality and improvement, without which medical progression is impossible. They have no sympathy with the idea that any man can be a successful or competent physician, by the study of one system alone, or that every man can become so skilled by the study of a work on domestic medicine, as Thomson contended as to enable him to successfully treat disease. Another important feature of education should be the proper *application* of scientific truth. A want of obedience to this, is the cause of the ill-success of many well educated physicians.

This non-application of science to the treatment of disease has been the cause of such poor success, that the ignorant pretender, having no knowledge of physiology or pathology has often suc-

ceeded in gaining a temporary reputation in opposition to the influence of the profession. In this, was one cause of Thomson's notoriety, and of his opposition to education. Forgetting that it was the misuse of knowledge that caused the fatality of disease treated by old physic, he like many other bold and fearless men of a fanatical tendency of mind, condemned many useful remedies in other systems of treatment, without investigating and testing their properties. This course of procedure was in direct antagonism to the educational policy, adopted by the Eclectics even in the early history of American Medical Reform. A Medical Education should be liberal, and comprehensive, and truth should be received from every part of the medical horizon, without regard to the respectability of the source in which it originated. And if there is any feature characteristic of American Eclecticism it is their liberal system of educating students in all the different systems of practice, and in making this knowledge practical rather than using it merely to discipline the mind. In the pursuit of this plan of education we are sure of making improvements in the profession. Indeed, statistics demonstrate that in proportion to the adoption of this plan in the study of the laws of organised beings, and in the prescription of remedies, has been the increase in longevity. In the sixteenth century it was 18 years. In the seventeenth it was 27 years. In the eighteenth it was 40 years, and from 1838 to 1855, it was 43 years. These results, indicate that, as the influence of the improvements of Homeopathy, of Hydropathy, and Eclecticism has been extended, so have health and life spread their blessings throughout the world. Guided by this lamp of experience, we judge that the destiny of progressive medicine will not be accomplished until it shall have triumphed over every species of quackery and empiricism. To attain this desirable result, a glorious band of reformers are sacrificing their comfort, their fortunes, and their professional reputation. America is their home of freedom, and along its sunny hill-sides and verdant glades, on its mountain heights and beside its majestic rivers they are seeking to discover those indigenous remedies that an All-Wise Providence has created for the removal of human ills. Aided by the ever widening principles of science as revealed in the structure of the

body, and applied to the regulation of sleep, exercise, diet and ventilation, and directed by the injunctions of the spiritual physician the Saviour of mankind, we may reasonably hope, to not only "arrest the pestilence that walketh in darkness," but to prolong human life to eighty or a hundred years. When these desirable results shall have been attained by the scientific reformers, then shall medical superstition, conservatism, and quackery cease to exist, and the healing art, no longer a by-word and a reproach, shall again have its representative at the feast of the Gods.

